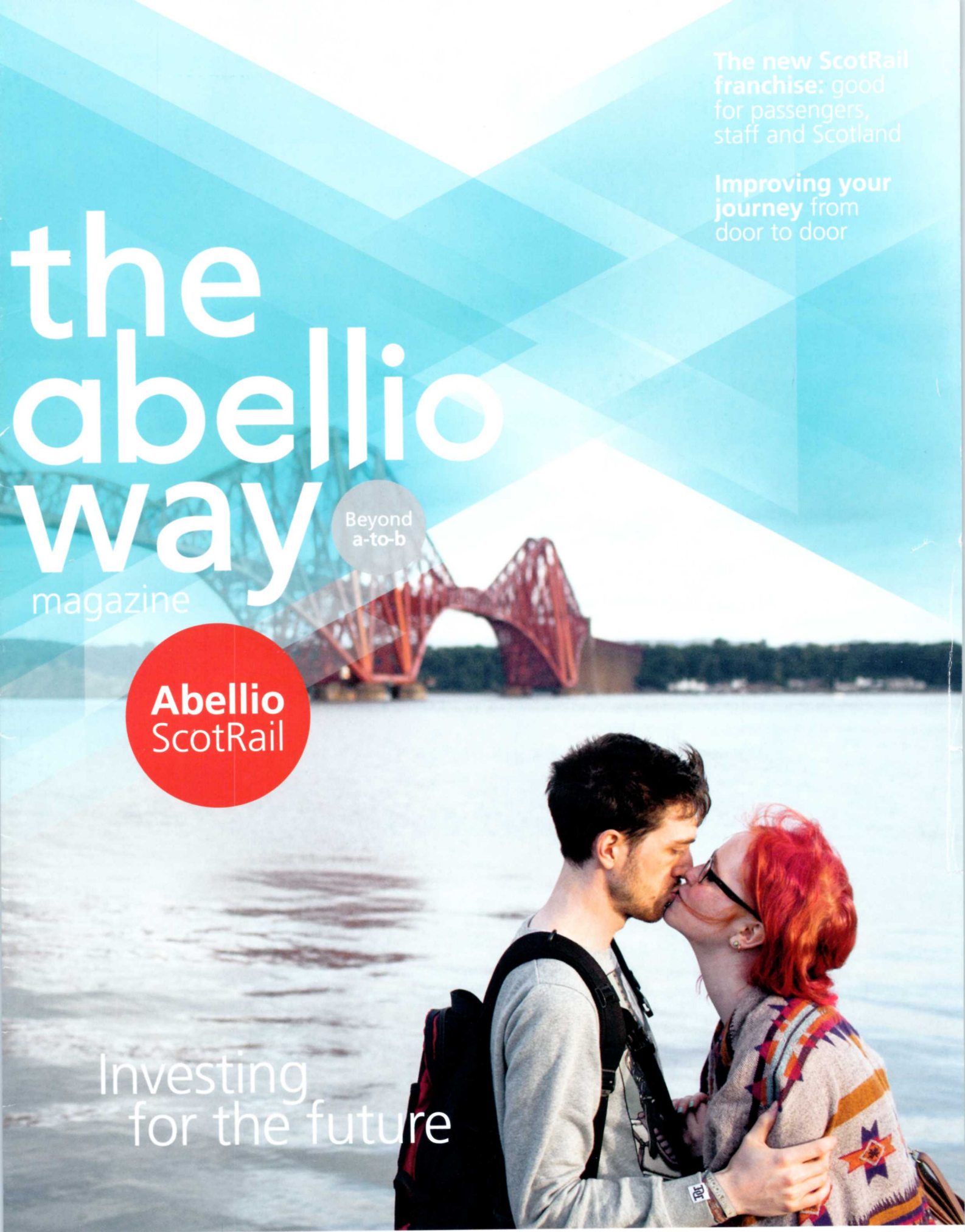
**The new ScotRail franchise:** good for passengers, staff and Scotland

**Improving your journey** from door to door

# the abellio way magazine

Beyond a-to-b

Abellio ScotRail



## Investing for the future



abellio

Travelling on the **Forth Bridge** and enjoying the wonderful view

A **northern gannet** flying in front of Bass Rock

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## Ambitious plans and Abellio

It is with enormous pleasure that I find myself writing the introduction to this special edition of The Abellio Way Magazine from my home in Edinburgh.

When Abellio was granted the privilege of operating Scotland's rail services, I had no hesitation in making this my home. You may consider that a rather self-serving decision, after all who wouldn't choose to live in this beautiful country! However, as a Dutchman, it won't surprise you that it was also a sensible business decision.

The Scottish Government has ambitious plans to transform its railways and I am grateful to them for choosing Abellio to assist in that purpose. We have many exciting and challenging plans for ScotRail, as you will read in this special edition, and it is my intention to work with the team wherever possible to deliver them.

**Performance for passengers**

Living here, I will also be travelling by train most days to our new UK headquarters in Glasgow, and regularly using other parts of the ScotRail network. During these trips, I'll be carefully scrutinising the performance we deliver for our passengers, and also expect them to tell me exactly what they think about our services.

In that respect, I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the ScotRail workforce. They regularly achieve high levels of performance and customer satisfaction. We now look forward to working with them and Network Rail to realise the full potential of Scotland's railway through our plans which include: brand new trains; a true intercity service; more smartcards; new flexible fares; exciting community programmes; and of course the creation of a railway tourism experience worthy of Scotland's world-famous scenery and attractions. In particular, we look forward to welcoming the new Borders Railway into the ScotRail family.

I hope you enjoy the Abellio ScotRail special edition of the magazine, and I look forward to our journey together over the coming years.

**Jeff Hoogesteger**
*CEO Abellio Group*


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# We are abellio

In October 2014, Transport Scotland announced that Abellio would run the new ScotRail franchise, telling the nation to expect a transformation in rail travel across the country. That may sound quite a task, but it is a true reflection of Ministers' ambition for Scotland's railway and the changes we have promised to deliver over the lifetime of the franchise. What can you expect from us?

## HOW WILL PASSENGERS BENEFIT?

Based on our experience of operating trains, trams and buses across Europe, Abellio has put together a clear plan for ScotRail to make sure the national rail service is in tune with the way people throughout Scotland have told us they want to live. It will benefit passengers across the entire network, whether travelling to work, on business, visiting friends and family or to enjoy the great outdoors.

In the Central Belt, we will deliver brand new trains, purpose-built for Scotland, and on routes connecting the country's seven cities we will replace the existing trains with high speed trains refurbished to a high standard. This will provide faster services on spacious trains with more carriages and new onboard facilities. Elsewhere on the ScotRail network, we will sharpen timetables and improve connections between services and smarten up the trains.

The availability of smartcard and internet tickets will make journeys more convenient. Significant discounts will be available and buying tickets will be quicker. Passengers will be able to hold tickets for rail, many other public transport trips, car parking and cycle hire on a single smartcard. We will also put in place a range of other measures to make sure customers' journeys to and from stations are faster and easier. For example, there will be better connections with buses, new tickets combining rail with ferry and air travel, and we will create the UK's largest cycle/rail network. New information sources will put passengers in control of their journey. Our intention is that ScotRail will play a key role in delivering a truly integrated national transport network.

And let's not forget that many train journeys in Scotland are an experience in their own right. Our plans will deliver scenic services worthy of the nation's world class tourist sights and destinations.

## OUR HERITAGE

Abellio is a subsidiary of Nederlandse Spoorwegen (Dutch Railways, NS), enabling us to draw on more than 175 years of expertise in the delivery of passenger transport services. NS operates one of the busiest and most complex rail networks in the world, with over 5,200 scheduled domestic train services each day. Abellio was established in 2001 and already successfully operates three train franchises in the UK, as well as bus services in London and Surrey: Abellio Greater Anglia (since 2012), Abellio London & Surrey (since 2009), Northern Rail (since 2004) and Merseyrail (since 2003). With public transport businesses in the UK, Germany and the Netherlands, we are now able to share best practice on a pan-European scale.

## BEYOND A-TO-B

We strongly believe that, with our 175 years of experience, we have a social duty to our passengers which extends beyond their journey on one of our trains, trams or buses. The ability to move freely, safely and with ease is a precondition for a healthy, successful and sustainable nation. We see public transport as part of the lifeblood of society. After all, our services help people carry out the essential tasks of everyday life. We help passengers travel to work, go to school and

**Claire Bereziat**
*Lecturer in Tourism, Glasgow Caledonian University*

"I am extremely excited by Abellio's outline of their concept (for tourism). It is refreshing to discover that tourism, one of Scotland's economic priority sectors, is deeply embedded in Abellio's bid, with an ambitious vision that will be transformative and exploit new opportunities."

**Clara Walker**
*Executive Director, Forth Environment Link*

"We welcome the opportunity to work closely with Abellio on a number of strategies including the development of a CyclePoint at Stirling station to promote and integrate cycling throughout the network, and involvement in an advisory group to oversee and support Abellio's Cycling Innovation Plan."

ScotRail
Scotland's Railway
ScotRail is operated by abellio

GERMANY

UNITED KINGDOM

NETHERLANDS

GERMANY

UNITED KINGDOM

meet friends and family. Our services must play an integrated role in the socio-economic development of the societies we serve. As such, we invest in station improvements, hub development and innovations so that we can cater for travel from door-to-door, not just between our stations. Our core focus is on one simple objective: working with all partners to meet our passengers' transport requirements during their entire journey. It means our customers are always at the heart of everything we do.

## HOW WE WORK: THE ABELLIO WAY

Our first responsibility is always to our passengers, our clients and our staff. We deliver efficient, high quality and innovative services and will not hesitate to challenge the traditional conventions of travel so that we can provide better quality, safer, more convenient transport services that genuinely benefit our clients and customers. We do this 'the Abellio Way'. This is our strategic framework, which provides a common and collaborative way for us to work with our clients and stakeholders, and for everyone in our business to work together. It drives operational improvement to help us achieve our ambition and represents the essence of what and who we are as a company. Genuine people, innovative in spirit and dedicated to a positive future for travel, this is the Abellio Way.

## Abellio: Beyond a-to-b

20,000 Employees

1.7 million passengers per day

1,500 buses

2,876 trains

236 trams

Countries
Netherlands
United Kingdom
Germany

**Simon Walton**
*Chairman, Campaign for Borders Rail*

"We'd like to say welcome to Abellio as you take on the ScotRail franchise. When you approached us it was with enthusiasm and interest. I know we can work together and, as always, Campaign for Borders Rail looks forward to any initiative that helps provide a service that we know is of great economic and regenerative importance to the Borders."

**The Abbotsford Trust**
*Abbotsford | Melrose | Roxburghshire*

"The opportunities which the Borders Railway presents for the region and for Abbotsford are huge. Abellio has been actively supportive of this railway project and we are looking forward to working closely with them in the future to develop its full potential."

# Shared vision for **transport transformation**

**Derek Mackay**
Minister for Transport and Islands for the Scottish Government

**Jeff Hoogesteger,** Chief Executive Officer of Abellio Group meets **Derek Mackay,** Minister for Transport and Islands for the Scottish Government.

**Jeff: "As Scotland's Transport Minister what are your immediate challenges for transport?"**

**Derek:** "This is an incredibly exciting period for transport in Scotland. The new Abellio ScotRail franchise promises an overhaul of train services throughout the country and will transform how the industry connects with communities through business and charity links, as well as investing millions in improving services and facilities. For passengers, there will be better trains, faster and more comfortable journeys and fairer ticket prices.

We'll also see the launch of the new Caledonian Sleeper franchise (operated by Serco) at the same time, which will bring a top-class tourism experience to our railways to compete with some of the world's most famous rail journeys. The Borders Railway opens later this year, nearly half a century since it was shut down in the infamous Beeching cuts which almost ripped the heart out of Scotland's railways. We're also investing in improvements to our railways in the Central Belt, on the Highland Main Line and from Aberdeen-Inverness, as well as keeping up the pressure to see the realisation of our ambition for high speed rail in Scotland.

Our railways are enjoying a renewed popularity and the £5 billion the Scottish Government is investing in rail will see that continue for generations to come. A successful railway is an enabler for economic growth and sustainability, as well as contributing towards environmental improvements and a healthier population. This is why the Scottish Government places such importance on rail. ScotRail is the single biggest contract let by the Scottish Government and it is imperative that it offers a service people want to use and enjoy using, as well as being a franchise that Scotland can be proud of.

In addition to rail, the Queensferry Crossing is Scotland's biggest infrastructure project in a generation and is progressing extremely well to be completed on time and under budget. The dualling of the A9 between Perth and Inverness will make a huge difference to those travelling north of the Central Belt and will, most importantly, improve safety on that road. We are also improving the motorways and constructing the Aberdeen/Western Peripheral Route to help ease the congestion in the city centre.

We continue to work with bus companies, local authorities and regional transport partnerships to improve the quality of bus services throughout Scotland and we are now taking forward the new Clyde and Hebrides Ferry Procurement. It is a vast and sprawling portfolio but one which I am excited to be a part of."

**Jeff: "Integration between all transport modes is important to the Scottish Government and for passengers. How do you see this developing over the next few years?"**

"For passengers, there will be better trains, faster and more comfortable journeys and fairer ticket prices"

**Derek:** "I've been extremely impressed by Abellio's plans for integrating the ScotRail franchise with other transport modes. The plans for door-to-door travel advice will be hugely welcomed by passengers using all forms of public transport. I'm also looking forward to seeing the development of the integrated timetables which will ensure people can go straight from bus to train to ferry etc.

I know that the work has already begun to ensure aligned bus and rail timetables for the Borders Railway, and the opening of transport interchange stations such as Galashiels and Edinburgh Gateway will allow passengers to move more easily from one mode to another.

*Continued on page 9 >*

North Bridge crossing high over **Waverley railway station** in Edinburgh

Abellio's CEO Jeff Hoogesteger and **Minister Derek Mackay** in the Scottish parliament building

**Gaining popularity: cycling** as an everyday way of getting around

The station building in Stirling was constructed in 1915 by James Miller, and is classified by Historic Scotland as **a Category A listed building**

"This new ScotRail franchise will also see a new approach to cycling with more bike spaces and bike rental at some stations"

**Jeff Hoogesteger**
Chief Executive Officer
Abellio Group

Even within rail we will see more integration, for example with the new Caledonian Sleeper and ScotRail franchises working to complement each other in terms of serving business and tourist passengers. I'm excited by the plans for the Great Scenic Railways of Scotland and I believe it will be a huge tourism boost which will see people taking in the dramatic scenery on the trip up from London on the Sleeper and then enjoying the ScotRail tourist routes.

Transport Scotland continues to work with the industry on finding solutions to the challenges of introducing a multi-modal smart card. We want to see the development of a card which can be used across all public transport modes, throughout the country. That will be beneficial in terms of encouraging more people to use public transport, and I have been pleased to see that Abellio ScotRail is already working well with industry partners to help make that vision a reality.

The ambitious targets Abellio has committed to for uptake of smart ticketing provide a huge opportunity to influence other modes and operators to adopt similar technologies and improve the experience for passengers."

**Jeff: "What contribution do you expect the new franchise to make to the growing levels of cycling in Scotland?"**

**Derek:** "Since my appointment as Transport Minister, I've been meeting with stakeholders across the portfolio, including the cycling community. They are understandably very passionate and very vocal about their area of interest and I want to embrace that and work with them to promote cycling as an everyday way of getting about, not just a leisure or sport pursuit.

Cycling has obvious health benefits, but there are also the environmental improvements brought on by the reduction in emissions as people move from car to bike. That plays to the Scottish Government's carbon reduction targets, and I believe that our vision of seeing 10% of all journeys being made on a bike by 2020 shows we are really serious about this. We are well aware that this is ambitious, but I am strongly of the opinion that it is achievable.

This new ScotRail franchise will also see a new approach to cycling with more bike spaces and bike rental at some stations, making it easier for people to cycle to the station, to take their bike all the way into work or to get a train to enjoy some of Scotland's fantastic cycling routes. We are already seeing a real difference, with cycling up more than 20% in Scotland over the past five years and I am sure that will continue."

**Jeff: "What links do you see between your former role as Minister for Local Government and Planning and your current role as Minister for Transport and Islands?"**

**Derek:** "There are obvious links between my previous portfolio and the current one in terms of planning, infrastructure and links with regional transport partnerships. My background before being elected to the Scottish Parliament was in local government, so I do feel that gives me a good understanding of the issues of importance to councils in Scotland.

The National Planning Framework obviously informs a lot of the work that is done by Transport Scotland and it has been very interesting for me to see that being put into practice. In terms of transport, there is a lot of interface between central and local government and I'm looking forward to seeing productive working relationships on some of the plans for train stations, integrated train and bus timetables, improvements to cycling infrastructure and integrated smart ticketing. I'm a Government Minister, but I am also a regular public transport user and that keeps me close to the passenger experience."

Cycle investments at Scottish stations. More about Bike & Go on page 17.

# **Abellio's vision** for the new ScotRail franchise

At the start of April, Abellio will begin the new ScotRail franchise, and already we have a thorough understanding of how we need to run the railway. That is because, before submitting our bid for the franchise, we spent two years consulting stakeholders the length and breadth of Scotland.

**Robert Samson**
*Passenger Manager, Passenger Focus*

"Passenger Focus is pleased that the new ScotRail franchise includes initiatives to raise service quality on trains and at stations across the whole Scottish rail network, in addition to major upgrades on the Edinburgh-Glasgow and intercity routes. We are expecting real improvements and will examine the impact on customer satisfaction through our National Rail Passenger Survey."

From the start, it was clear Scottish Ministers wanted the new franchise to be different, reflecting the views of the many people and organisations we met. Their vision, and ours, is that ScotRail will become a national asset the country can be proud of.

This means that, as well as raising the standard of rail travel, we must consider ScotRail's role as a major national business, for example in how we work with our suppliers, our staff and trade unions. We also need to make journeys more affordable to help people pursue their careers and leisure interests. Another priority is to support a growing economy by providing more seats for commuters, more punctual journeys and better quality business travel. In short, the new franchise needs to be good for passengers, good for staff and good for Scotland.

## GOOD FOR PASSENGERS

Our plans to improve ScotRail's services involve faster, more reliable, better value and easier journeys across Scotland.

### SCOTLAND'S FIRST TRUE INTERCITY NETWORK

On long distance routes, we will transform journeys between the country's seven cities by providing Scotland's first true intercity network. By the end of 2018, we will replace the current trains with high speed trains which will increase the number of seats on intercity services by more than a third and we will look to deliver a headline journey time of below three hours between Glasgow and Inverness.

### THE BEST FOOD AND DRINK

Before entering service, the high speed trains will undergo a major refurbishment and we will ensure onboard conditions and facilities are in tune with the way business and leisure passengers want to travel. They will include free wifi, a much enhanced catering service showcasing the best Scottish food and drink, and ample storage for sports equipment including skis. Each train will have a first class carriage with tables at all seats so business travellers can work in comfort.

### 7 MINUTES QUICKER

Another major initiative will introduce new trains on the Edinburgh-Glasgow and Stirling-Alloa-Dunblane routes in 2017 and 2018 following electrification of these lines. This will enable us to provide quicker, more comfortable journeys. On the Edinburgh-Glasgow route, crowding will be addressed

by operating also eight-car trains, compared to six-car at present, and the fastest journeys will be seven minutes quicker than today.

### PREVENT INCIDENTS THAT CAUSE DELAYS

Further service improvements will take place across the network. Early initiatives will include refurbished trains and additional capacity on existing Glasgow electric routes. We will also introduce a new scenic trains service with refurbished carriages on picturesque lines (see pages 14 and 20) and provide free wifi on all ScotRail trains. Across the railway, travel will be more reliable because we will focus on right time operation. Our new Alliance with Network Rail will help prevent incidents that cause delays, for example by jointly planning engineering works to reduce the risk of them overrunning.

### EXTRA SPACE FOR SHOPS

Similarly, our station upgrade programme will cover routes across the ScotRail network. Major improvements will take place at a number of stations, including Inverness and Aberdeen where we will create extra space for shops and a city gateway feel. Catering at these and other well-used stations will be enhanced through new 'To Go' convenience store kiosks. In addition, over 40 stations will benefit from new shelters, and many will gain extra car parking spaces. The effect will be to create a higher quality and consistent customer experience with facilities appropriate for different types of station.

### BENEFITS

Our new range of better value fares will include flexible carnet tickets covering the number of journeys customers want to make over a period of their choice. Discounts on current fares will reflect each person's travel choices. Benefits will include lower cost commuting for part time workers – just as full time workers receive reduced price travel from season tickets. We will also introduce cheaper leisure fares such as Advance Purchase tickets from £5 on intercity routes and a new club to encourage more people aged over 50 to use the train. These benefits will be introduced over the course of the franchise.

### DOOR-TO-DOOR TRAVEL

All our train service and station improvements form part of our overall plan to provide simpler door-to-door travel. Further facilities and services for passengers will include: a Journey Companion App offering door-to-door travel information; clearer information on how trains are running through our new customer information desks at key city stations; customer information desks at key interchanges and large city stations; information screens showing connecting buses and ferries at hub stations; and dramatically increasing smartcard use to provide more convenient ticket purchase options.

### 3,500 MORE CYCLE PARKING SPACES

We will also integrate rail with other modes of transport more effectively, for example by working with bus operators to provide better connections to train services, launching our Cab & Go taxi booking service, and making cycling to and from stations a more attractive option. This will include 3,500 more cycle parking spaces at stations, CyclePoints offering a staffed cycle storage and cycle services facility at three city stations, and Bike & Go cycle hire in at least 10 stations.

Our intention is that ScotRail will play a major part in delivering a truly joined up national transport network.

## GOOD FOR STAFF

ScotRail's workforce has done a great job and will have a crucial role in further improving passengers' journeys. We want our staff to be able to help customers better, advance their careers, have greater job satisfaction, opportunities to learn new skills, and share in the success of the business.

### NEW TRAINING INITIATIVES

Therefore we will focus equally on the staff experience and customer experience. We will introduce a number of new training initiatives, including Inspire customer service training for the entire workforce, and also provide support for employees taking Scottish Vocational Qualifications. We will obtain Scottish Qualifications Authority accreditation for our own ScotRail training centre, and set up train fleet centres of excellence to build technical capabilities.

These are just some of the learning programmes which will offer opportunities for employees to refresh and improve their skills, and in some cases gain new qualifications.

### EMPLOYEES WITH SMARTPHONES

We will also ensure staff have the right equipment for their job, for example by providing frontline employees with smartphones so they can receive up-to-the-minute information to pass on to passengers.

The contribution employees make will be recognised through a number of new initiatives such as additional payments if we meet performance targets. But, we will start by saying 'thanks' when a job is well done. Our ScotRail staff benefits schemes will include discounts in high street stores and the option to receive lifestyle check-ups, flu jabs and advice on quitting smoking. We will also ensure all staff and contractors are paid at least the living wage, and there will be staff representation at franchise Board meetings.

# GOOD FOR SCOTLAND

We have deliberately designed our plans for ScotRail with the clear intention of helping to achieve Scottish ministers' key objectives for the country set out in the National Performance Framework. These objectives range from supporting economic growth to creating a fairer, healthier, stronger and greener Scotland, and will become embedded in our strategic thinking.

## BETTER VALUE FARES

Our plans to raise the quality of travel across the country, offer better value fares, more seats for commuting and business travel, and new training opportunities for staff reflect this agenda. In addition, we will introduce further initiatives which address specific aspects of the Scottish Government's Purpose.

## JOBSEEKERS WILL BENEFIT

We will reach out to the business community by providing new facilities for business travellers such as on-demand office space at city stations. Long-term unemployed jobseekers will benefit from free rail travel to help them into work, and as part of our commitment to the next generation of ScotRail employees we will recruit 10 apprentices every year from areas of high unemployment. In line with our responsibilities as the national train operator, the way we select our suppliers will provide fair opportunity for SMEs to compete with larger companies and win contracts. In doing so, we will make use of the Scottish Government Procurement Portal.

## SWITCH TO RAIL

Our partnership with VisitScotland will draw more visitors to the country from across the world and promote local businesses to tourists. We will also seek every opportunity to open up our stations to become community assets.

Our plans for ScotRail will build on the environmental credentials of our other franchises to create a lower carbon business, for example by installing new technology to cut emissions at depots and stations. Our improvements to train services, stations and transport integration, along with new fares, will also persuade people who currently travel by car to switch to rail, contributing to greener journeys across Scotland.

**Dr John McCormick**
*Chairman, Scottish Association for Public Transport*

"Abellio's plans for ScotRail will have a significant impact in helping to develop a truly integrated public transport network for Scotland. We also expect the new franchise to deliver a shift to rail and other low carbon forms of travel through improvements to the quality and capacity of train services and by providing more convenient door-to-door journeys using sustainable transport."

**Paul Tetlaw**
*Board Member and Rail Campaigner, Transform Scotland*

"In our response to the franchise consultation we asked for a number of improvements to the railway in Scotland, in particular better trains for the intercity routes, pro-active promotion of the world renowned rural routes and support for Community Rail Partnerships. Abellio have delivered on all three of these key areas and we look forward to working with them in the future to further promote rail travel in Scotland."

**Colin Borland**
*Head of External Affairs (Scotland), Federation of Small Businesses*

"It is really encouraging that the new ScotRail franchisee wants to help Scotland's small businesses compete for contracts on a level playing field. Plans to develop rail tourism should also benefit many small businesses and local economies, especially in our more rural areas – and free travel for the long-term unemployed could make it easier to recruit."

**Ross Martin**
*Chief Executive, Scottish Council for Development and Industry*

"Efficient transport links play a key role in modern economies. The faster journey times, additional capacity and improved access to stations that the new ScotRail franchise promises mean the railway can contribute significantly to a more prosperous Scotland."

# ScotRail and Network Rail: Working **Together** for the Passenger

As an input to the ScotRail franchise process Network Rail worked with Transport Scotland to promote ways of achieving much more effective collaboration with the new franchise holder, with specific proposals for alliancing. Dominic Booth and Phil Hufton explain how they are working towards this vision.

**Dominic Booth**
Managing Director,
Abellio UK

**Phil Hufton**
Managing Director,
Operations, Network Rail

Throughout the bidding process, Abellio demonstrated a willingness and a desire to work collaboratively with Network Rail in an 'Alliance', wand in April 2014 an agreement was signed between both organisations that outlined how we would work together should Abellio be the successful bidder.

Under the agreement, Network Rail and Abellio will remain separate companies but act as a joint team led by a single management Board and headed by an Alliance Managing Director who will report to both Network Rail and Abellio. While there is still much work to be done to bring both organisations together, we anticipate that the alliance will come into operation during 2015.

## WHY AN ALLIANCE?

Quite simply we want a high performing railway in Scotland that delivers the best service possible for all passengers and all operators using the network. We believe that a joint team, sharing a common vision and objectives, is the best way to achieve this. It's about putting aside divisions created by separate organisational priorities to deliver to a common purpose and make decisions that benefit all users of the railway.

We also believe that working in an Alliance will create an environment for our people that is challenging, engaging and, most importantly, rewarding by removing the barriers that prevent them from doing things quickly, efficiently and effectively. An environment where skills will be easily exchanged between both organisations, where we can work together on our response to infrastructure incidents or weather resilience, where we can move closer in the management of our property assets and where we have the flexibility to review our access planning arrangements to be able to work efficiently and with least passenger disruption.

## HOW WILL WE DO IT?

We will work to a common vision that puts safety above all else and uses every opportunity to drive efficiency. We'll value good team working and constructive mutual challenge to create an outward focussed, professional Alliance that adds value and uses a balance of data, intuition and experience to make effective decisions that put the customer first.

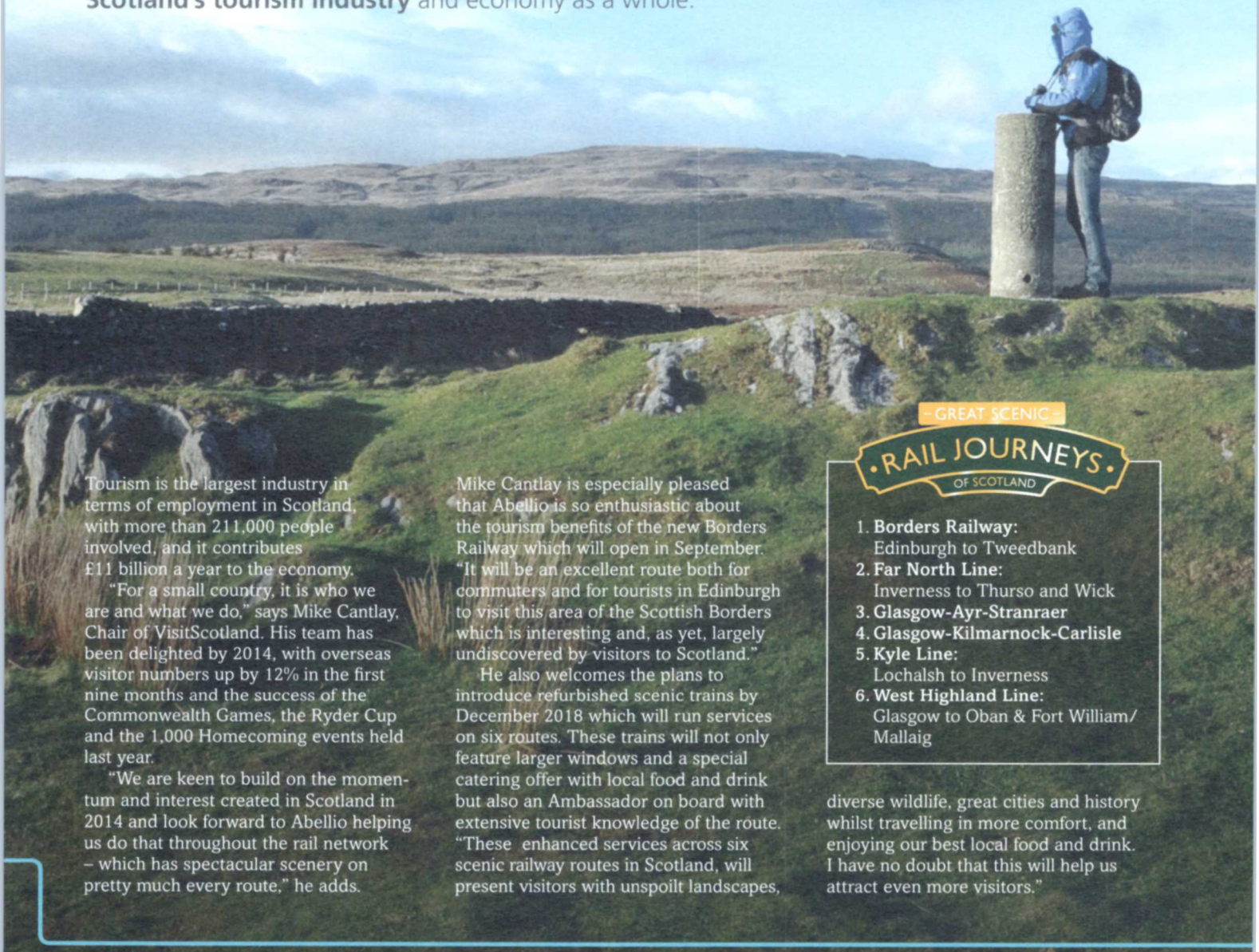
The work to achieve this has already begun as we look at every part of the railway's operations in Scotland.

Quite simply we want a high performing railway in Scotland that delivers the best service possible for all passengers and all operators using the network

In the next edition of The Abellio Way Magazine you will learn more about this 'Alliance'.

# Travel **the Great Scenic Railways** of Scotland

Introducing refurbished scenic trains will **further boost Scotland's tourism industry** and economy as a whole.



Tourism is the largest industry in terms of employment in Scotland, with more than 211,000 people involved, and it contributes £11 billion a year to the economy.

"For a small country, it is who we are and what we do," says Mike Cantlay, Chair of VisitScotland. His team has been delighted by 2014, with overseas visitor numbers up by 12% in the first nine months and the success of the Commonwealth Games, the Ryder Cup and the 1,000 Homecoming events held last year.

"We are keen to build on the momentum and interest created in Scotland in 2014 and look forward to Abellio helping us do that throughout the rail network – which has spectacular scenery on pretty much every route," he adds.

Mike Cantlay is especially pleased that Abellio is so enthusiastic about the tourism benefits of the new Borders Railway which will open in September. "It will be an excellent route both for commuters and for tourists in Edinburgh to visit this area of the Scottish Borders which is interesting and, as yet, largely undiscovered by visitors to Scotland."

He also welcomes the plans to introduce refurbished scenic trains by December 2018 which will run services on six routes. These trains will not only feature larger windows and a special catering offer with local food and drink but also an Ambassador on board with extensive tourist knowledge of the route. "These enhanced services across six scenic railway routes in Scotland, will present visitors with unspoilt landscapes, diverse wildlife, great cities and history whilst travelling in more comfort, and enjoying our best local food and drink. I have no doubt that this will help us attract even more visitors."

GREAT SCENIC RAIL JOURNEYS OF SCOTLAND

1. **Borders Railway:** Edinburgh to Tweedbank
2. **Far North Line:** Inverness to Thurso and Wick
3. **Glasgow-Ayr-Stranraer**
4. **Glasgow-Kilmarnock-Carlisle**
5. **Kyle Line:** Lochalsh to Inverness
6. **West Highland Line:** Glasgow to Oban & Fort William/ Mallaig

## STIRLING CASTLE

There's more than ever to see and do at Stirling Castle. Visit Stirling to experience the splendour, colour and craftsmanship, of Scotland's Renaissance Kings and Queens.

## GLENEAGLES GOLF COURSE

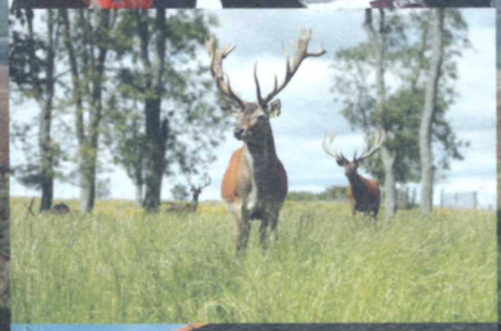
Golf is the beating heart of Gleneagles. Whether it is for the stunning vistas the courses provide, or to tread in the footsteps of the legends of the game, there are so many reasons to play golf at Gleneagles.

## FRINGE FESTIVAL

The Edinburgh Fringe Festival is the largest and most exciting arts festival in the world. For three weeks every August it takes over Scotland's capital city. Come and join the celebration!

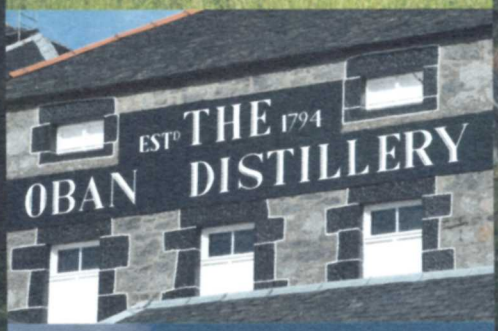
## RANNOCH MOOR

Escape to the wilderness in Scotland: Rannoch Moor. Wandering through the moor you will experience perfect harmony with nature. You may see curlew, grouse, roe deer and red deer.



## WHISKY

Visit Oban for a great food and drink experience. Take a dram at the small, but perfectly-formed Oban distillery, and after that head towards the waterfront with its wonderful seafood stalls and restaurants.




## DUNNET HEAD LIGHTHOUSE

Just over 12 miles east of Thurso is Dunnet Head lighthouse – the most northerly point of the British mainland.

If public transport is to offer a genuine and attractive alternative to cars, it must provide a similar or better travel experience. This means we need to cater for our customers' entire door-to-door journey, not simply travel between stations. New communication technology, alongside reviews of rail and bus timetables, means we have a real opportunity to get this right. Providing door-to-door transport services is in Abellio's DNA.

# A seamless journey from **door to door**

## TAILORED INFORMATION

People need good information on fares and departure and arrival times before and during their journeys. Real time information, particularly on any delays and their impact, puts passengers in control and allows them to select the most convenient means of reaching their destination. We invest in online journey planners, mobile apps and customer information screens at stations. They provide up-to-the-minute information on how services are running, live departure times, personalised travel alerts and details on how to travel to and from stations.

## INTERCHANGE

High quality and attractive station facilities can address any concerns customers have about changing between public transport services during their journey. Clear signage, wifi, maps and information, both real-time and printed, help passengers to travel easily. Stations should also offer convenient and secure cycle storage and quick, simple and safe access by bike and on foot.

At large transport hubs, a range of shops, catering outlets and areas for people to work mean passengers can make good use of their time. In addition, people travelling long distances need good facilities for handling and storing luggage, and it is important that we ensure customers feel safe – for example by improving CCTV coverage.

## CONNECTIONS

Reliable and frequent services, well informed staff and good quality information help avoid anxieties caused by long waiting times, missed connections and any delayed services. We develop new timetables based on 'transfer protocols' to provide convenient connections between trains and other modes of transport, and seek to work with other operators to create the best possible timetables for our passengers. We equip station and train staff with smartphones so they have up to date details on connections to pass on to customers, and also make information available through a range of online and offline sources.

## TICKETING

Tickets are valid on different operators' services and different modes of transport. Smart tickets make it much easier to use public transport and quicker to board buses and trains. Our fares and ticketing systems are designed to make it easy for passengers to understand what their journey costs, and provide flexible payment and travel choices.

# **Get on** your bike!

Abellio will launch its Bike & Go station cycle hire scheme at 10 Scottish stations in the first two years of the franchise, with the first two stations going live before the summer of 2015. **Kaj Mook**, Customer Services Director at Merseyrail, explains its importance. He was previously Director of OV-fiets, the successful station cycle hire scheme in the Netherlands.

**Kaj Mook**
Customer Services Director, Merseyrail

**Where does the idea come from?** "It is important for us to recognise that train travel between stations is just one part of our customers' journey. If we want to encourage more people to use trains, then we need to look at their complete door-to-door travel experience. Customer surveys consistently show that it is the journeys to and from the station where rail passengers are least satisfied. So we started looking at how we could improve those journeys."

**When was it launched?** "Bike & Go has been running in the Netherlands for more than ten years, under the name OV-fiets. It has proved hugely popular and has been instrumental in persuading more people to use public transport because the total door-to-door experience is better."

**Will it be as popular in Scotland?** "Obviously the Netherlands is known for its cycling, but we believe there is great potential in Scotland and the rest of the UK. We launched Bike & Go at our three rail franchises in England in late 2013 and it is expanding rapidly. We support all efforts to develop a cycling culture and build a better cycling infrastructure here."

**Why bikes?** "Most people do not want to walk more than 10 minutes from the train station. But by cycling, they can travel three times as far. So it opens up a new option for making relatively short trips from the station. And people like the freedom and flexibility of bikes. With Bike & Go, they can pick up a bike within a minute of arriving at the station and be on their way. It is simple, cheap and, as an added benefit, it helps build fitness and is better for the environment."

**Is it aimed only at leisure travellers?** "In the Netherlands, half of all OV-fiets trips are made for business or commuting journeys. Numerous companies, both large and small, have provided their employees with a membership card so they can hire a bike. This option will also be available to businesses in Scotland."

**Where will Bike & Go be offered?**
Abellio will launch (at least) 10 Bike & Go locations before the end of the second year of the franchise. In Glasgow, Stirling and Edinburgh, Bike & Go will be available through new CyclePoints which will also provide secure cycle parking, cycle repair, cycle accessories and information for cyclists. The remaining Bike & Go locations will include other city stations.

Visit www.bikeandgo.co.uk for details of how the system works.

**Keith Irving,**
*Chief Executive, Cycling Scotland*

Cycling Scotland congratulates Abellio on their successful franchise bid. We were delighted to have Abellio at our national conference in November to give an overview of some of their exciting plans for improving cycling facilities and better integration of cycling and train travel. We look forward to working with Abellio on how public bike hire schemes like Bike & Go can increase the number of people cycling and using the train to get around. This will help us reach the Cycling Action Plan for Scotland's shared vision that by 2020, 10% of journeys in Scotland will be by bike."

QUIETER

EDINBURGH-GLASGOW SERVICES

SMOOTHER RIDE

CAPACITY MONITORING

# Abellio and Hitachi:
# Bringing **New Trains**

Recognising that transport is an enabler for sustainable social and economic growth, the Scottish Government has committed to substantial and comprehensive investment in its rail network. The Edinburgh Glasgow Improvement Programme (EGIP) is part of that plan, and will see investment in Scotland's railway infrastructure, rolling stock and service provision, which will combine to provide a significant boost to Scotland's wealth and long term economic sustainability.

The programme has already seen the opening of the £25 million new-look Haymarket Station in Edinburgh in 2013, and will also deliver a complete transformation of Glasgow's Queen Street station over the coming years. The specification of the new ScotRail franchise was designed carefully to complement the Government's investment programme, and a major part of Abellio's plans for the franchise was brand new trains for Scotland.

## FASTER AND LONGER TRAINS

Abellio and Hitachi are now working in close partnership to bring 70 new electric trains to Scotland during 2017/18. These AT200-trains will comprise 46 three-car trains and 24 four-car trains to operate along the Edinburgh-Glasgow and Stirling-Alloa-Dunblane lines and onto

The new trains will play an important role in delivering extensive benefits for Scottish rail users

WIFI AND POWER SOCKETS

INTER-GANGWAYS CONNECTION

# to Scotland

*ScotRail is operated by* abellio

some south Glasgow suburban routes. A further 10 trains will be ordered if the ScotRail contract is extended to its full 10 year term and there has been the growth predicted. These faster, longer trains will play an important role in delivering extensive benefits for Scottish rail users and providing long term economic sustainability.

The new AT200 train has been designed to transform the regional commuter travel experience. With a top speed of 100 miles per hour, each carriage is 23 metres in length, and features gangways between vehicles to make better use of the passenger space and allow catering to be provided along the full length of the train on each journey. In order to meet the delivery schedule, the first seven trains will be built in Hitachi's Kasado factory in Japan, with the remaining 63 being built in Hitachi Rail Europe's train manufacturing facility at Newton Aycliffe, opening later in 2015.

## NEW TRAINS FOR SCOTLAND

"This is an important deal for passengers and for Scotland," says Jeff Hoogesteger, Chief Executive of Abellio. "New trains for Scotland were a key feature in Abellio's offer to the Scottish Government, and the guarantee of 70 Hitachi AT200s during 2017/18 will ensure that the full benefits of the Edinburgh Glasgow Improvement Programme are realised for passengers as quickly as possible."

These passenger benefits will include faster journey times, greater capacity and higher service quality. However, the benefits of the investment will spread much wider than that. For example, the new trains will be more energy efficient, and innovations in design and lightweight construction will reduce the impact of services on important infrastructure.

Andy Barr, Hitachi Rail Europe's Chief Operating Officer, said: "We are delighted to be delivering these trains in partnership with Abellio. This forms the start of a long-term partnership to boost passenger services in Scotland, and we will be working closely with Abellio to ensure that services are kept to a very high standard across this period. This is also the first contract for our recently launched AT200 commuter train. With the majority of manufacturing taking place in our Newton Aycliffe factory, this is another sign of our confidence in UK manufacturing."

# Full **Steam** Ahead!

The positive reaction from stake-holders to the announcement that Abellio had been awarded the ScotRail franchise was fantastic, and underlined to us just how passionately Scottish people feel about their national railway. However, we were taken by surprise that the biggest story on the day wasn't our plans for brand new trains, but our plans to increase services using some of the oldest trains in the world – steam trains!

From the earliest days of our bid preparations over two years ago, there was no shortage of volunteers from Abellio to tour the scenic railways of Scotland and prepare our plans for steam. For many of our Dutch colleagues it was the first time they had seen real mountains.

## WORLD CLASS TOURIST DESTINATION

Over the first year of the new franchise we will bring steam services to five routes. In the following years we will enhance scenic rail services on these routes (except for the Highland Main Line) with refurbished trains with larger windows, table top maps, printed guides on the routes, more space for cycles and luggage. Other initiatives are the appointment of Tourism Ambassadors on board with expert knowledge on the route and special offering of Scottish food and drink. We will do this in partnership with Visit Scotland and the Scottish Tourism Alliance.

From the reactions we've seen so far, you are as excited as we are about these plans!

HIGHLAND MAIN LINE:
**STIRLING TO INVERNESS**

FAR NORTH LINE:
**INVERNESS TO DUNROBIN CASTLE**

BORDERS RAILWAY:
**EDINBURGH TO TWEEDBANK**

GLASGOW &
SOUTH WESTERN LINE:
**CARLISLE TO GLASGOW**

WEST HIGHLAND LINE:
**GLASGOW TO FORT WILLIAM**

**The Glenfinnan Viaduct** on the West Highland Line, overlooking the waters of Loch Shiel

Sunset at **Loch Shiel**, 20 km west of Fort William. Looking out on the mountains in the north east

Investing
for **this**
**generation**
and the next
Scotland will benefit
from a **sizable**
**$CO_2$ reduction**
per passenger kilometre

# **Transport Scotland:** Investing for the future

An interview with Transport Scotland's Director of Rail, **Aidan Grisewood.**

**Aidan Grisewood**
Transport Scotland's Director of Rail

**Patronage on Scotland's railway has increased over 35% in the past decade. What explains this strong growth?**
There has been unexpectedly strong growth across the UK network, but particular things have encouraged rail use in Scotland. I'd point to investment in infrastructure and new trains, improved punctuality and the introduction of 200 additional services. It's all put us in a better position to take a more expansionist view of what rail can do in the future.

**How does Transport Scotland plan to accommodate further growth in the years 2014-1019?**
The scale of investment in infrastructure projects through the Edinburgh-Glasgow Improvement Programme (EGIP) and elsewhere on the network is really important. What was encouraging about Abellio's bid was seeing this investment augmented by commitments on new electric trains, High Speed Trains, an overall 23% increase in carriages, and reduced journey times in response to the challenge we set to encourage more growth. There is a particular opportunity to make use of off-peak capacity. A lot can be done through marketing and working with attractions across Scotland to generate new journeys and benefit the economy. There is also plenty of potential to encourage people to switch from car to rail, for example through attractive fares.

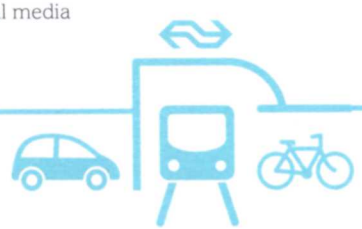
**Further ahead, what will be your key challenges in the years 2019-2024?**
It will be about what we can do to facilitate further growth in passenger numbers and freight and improve journey times – for example Phase Two of Aberdeen-Inverness Improvement Project, future phases of Highland Main Line improvements and investment between Aberdeen and the Central Belt. We are already planning for that as well as prioritising next steps for electrification.

**What message would you give passengers who experience some disruption to their regular journeys during infrastructure works like EGIP?**
To a degree, there will always be disruption during major projects. It is important for the industry to work closely together to keep that to a minimum, communicate early with passengers so they can plan accordingly, and work closely with bus operators and Transport Scotland on alternative travel arrangements and contingency plans. It's also important to let passengers know how projects will benefit them in the future. EGIP has already achieved a great deal with little disruption – for example keeping Haymarket station open during extension works. For some of the planned works in the future that is going to prove more difficult.

**What is your view of excellent customer service?**
Train service reliability is vital. But we are also seeing customer expectations rising in all industries. When people put their hand in their pocket, they expect more than previously. There are opportunities to provide more personalised services and Abellio's door-to-door journey plans fit well with this trend. It's also about how passengers are treated during disruption, not just when things run well. Social media offers real scope to enhance information services for passengers.

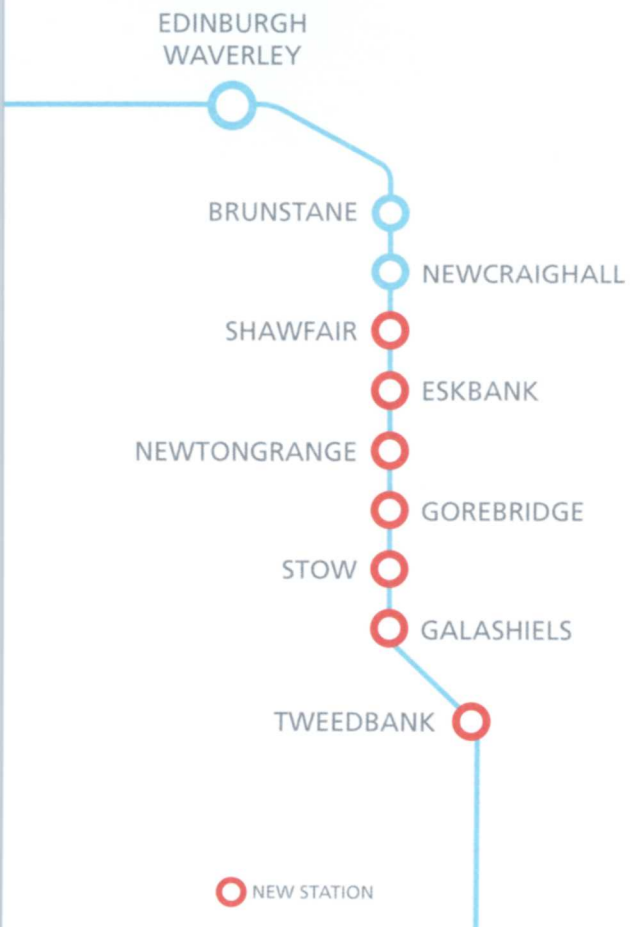
**How would you describe the importance of the Borders Railway?**
It's going to have a tremendous impact. It will grow the Edinburgh city region and make it a more attractive place to live and work. For the Borders, it will act as a catalyst for businesses to set up in the area and for tourism. There are many important social aspects too. The scheme will transform public transport to and from Edinburgh, taking half an hour off public transport trips from places like Galashiels. The key is for us and Abellio to work with local authorities, Scottish Enterprise, local attractions and Visit Scotland to realise the full opportunity.

**What have been your highlights as Director of Rail?**
Without doubt, the ScotRail and Caledonian Sleeper franchise awards. Working closely with Ministers, Transport Scotland put huge effort into creating attractive franchise specifications and running the process. We were clear that the competitions were not simply about cost but how the franchises can contribute to the Scottish Government's overall Purpose in terms of wider social and economic benefits. Seeing that the winning bidders had understood what we were trying to achieve was really rewarding. It's exciting to be moving into the delivery phase. Other highlights have been every visit to see progress on the Borders Railway and getting the opportunity to see the view from the top of the Forth Bridge.



# Bringing the **Borders Railway** to life

In September, special steam services will mark the reopening of the Borders Railway during a weekend of celebrations. They will be the first trains to run on the route connecting Edinburgh with Midlothian and the Scottish Borders. From Summer 2015, the Borders Railway will provide rail services to the Scottish Borders and Midlothian for the first time in over 40 years. The line will also be the longest domestic railwaybuilt in Britain for over 100 years.




The Borders Railway provides the opportunity for our ScotRail franchise to work with employers, the tourist industry, housebuilders and bus operators across the 30-mile route to show how new transport links can have a transformational impact on communities and lifestyles.

The Scottish Government's vision for the Borders Railway is that it will be a driving force for job creation, tourism and sustainable development in the region. Already there are plans for new housing, business and leisure hubs around the seven new stations on the line.

For example, Shawfair station, bordering the City of Edinburgh, will serve over 4,000 new homes and three new schools. Easy access from the station to land earmarked for new business premises will help attract employment to the region. Elsewhere on the line, Tweedbank industrial estate will be redeveloped to become a state of the art Central Borders Business Park, and sites for thousands of new homes have been identified in the surrounding Borders area. Affordability policies will ensure local people are not priced out of housing developments near to the stations.

## REDUCING CAR JOURNEYS

The new railway will provide convenient travel to work for the many people who move to the area, as well as better journeys for the 24,000 people who already commute from Midlothian and the Borders into Edinburgh. Transport Scotland forecasts that tens of thousands of peak car trips will switch to rail, taking pressure off the roads and improving air quality. In addition, it will offer a relaxing, easy trip for tourists drawn by the Borders scenery and attractions such as the National Mining Museum at Newtongrange and Abbotsford House, the home of Sir Walter Scott.

In one of his last acts as First Minister, Alex Salmond symbolised the tourism potential of the

Borders Railway by announcing the intention to relocate the 160-piece Great Tapestry of Scotland to Tweedbank. "I want to set a big target for the Borders," Mr Salmond said. "Edinburgh Castle attracts 1.4 million tourists each year. I see no reason why the Borders' tourist potential shouldn't take the number of journeys beyond the million mark going down the line."

## PROSPEROUS

Our ScotRail franchise will have a significant part to play in delivering the Scottish government's vision to create a more sustainable, prosperous and enjoyable way of life in the area, and not just through the quality of rail services we provide. For example, Abellio has plans to work with housing developers and local authorities to create convenient walking and cycling routes from new housing and employment areas to our stations, drawing on our experience from the Netherlands.

We will also become part of the tourism industry and ensure rail travel is seen as part of everyday life in the Borders. For example, we plan to hold promotional events in schools and colleges and work with estate agents, supermarkets and other local companies to promote the railway. Our Great Scenic Railways of Scotland campaign and scenic trains initiatives (see pages 14 and 20) will provide tourism Ambassadors on the route to assist and advise visitors, and lay the ground for us to work with communities along the line to promote attractions in their area.

## TOURIST ATTRACTION

In addition, the railway will act as a tourist attraction in its own right due to the beauty of the journey and our plans to work with charter companies to offer seasonal steam trains. The Scottish government's aim is for the line to be recognised as the greatest steam railway in Europe. A 'taster' steam service will run from the opening of the line until October. We want regular seasonal steam and charter trains to become a permanent fixture.

We also see great potential to work with Transport Scotland and bus operators to provide high quality frequent links to stations which integrate bus and rail travel.

In the run up to the opening of the line, we will build excitement throughout the region with a range of marketing campaigns, and then help to deliver a truly memorable weekend of launch events. "We will bring every ounce of our expertise to the delivery of exceptional services that will exploit the full tourism and business potential of this iconic new line," Abellio chief executive Jeff Hoogesteger said. Our ambition is to provide a railway of which to communities along the line can be proud and make a real contribution to the government's vision for Midlothian and the Scottish Borders.

BORDERS RAILWAY
The reopening will be in September during a weekend of celebrations

INFRASTRUCTURE
The work is finished and it is now driver training

ABBOTSFORD HOUSE
For tourists an easy trip to the home of Sir Walter Scott

TWEEDBANK
Abellio will provide a railway which the Borders community will be proud of

NEWTONGRANGE
Installing a footbridge

EDINBURGH WAVERLEY IN UNDER AN HOUR

WAVERLEY

30 MINS

45 MINS

Scotland & the Netherlands

# **Close ties** woven over the centuries

ROTTERDAM

There is certainly nothing new about a strong relationship between the Scots and the Dutch. Merchants from the two countries developed close trading ties back in the Middle Ages, creating a flourishing exchange of goods and ideas.

VEERE

## THRIVING TRADE

A Dutch company preparing to operate trains in Scotland is the latest in a long line of important business partnerships between the two countries, dating back as far as the fifteenth century. Scottish salmon, wool and coal have long been sent across the North Sea to Dutch ports, with the ships taking a range of luxury products back to Scotland. The trading relationships have seen Dutch people make their home right along the east coast of Scotland, while many Scots settled in Rotterdam and in Veere in the southern Dutch province of Zeeland. In fact, one tenth of Veere's population was Scottish back in 1600.

## SHARING IDEAS

Many Scots, such as Sir Robert Sibbald, studied in the Netherlands. Having spent time in Leiden, Sir Robert put the knowledge he gained into practice in Edinburgh, basing his designs for the city's famous Botanical Gardens on Dutch principles. Back in the Netherlands, Scottish diplomat William MacDowell helped to found the University of Groningen in 1614. This exchange of ideas has thrived right up to the present day. Now Abellio is hoping to win over Scotland with transport innovations, such as Bike & Go, which have proved hugely popular for our parent company Nederlandse Spoorwegen (Dutch Railways).

UNIVERSITY OF GRONINGEN

## THE DUTCH MACKAYS

Centuries of links between the Netherlands and Scotland have left an enduring mark. Many Scots working in places like Veere and Rotterdam married Dutch women. Most of their descendants stayed in the Netherlands. To this day, many Scottish names are listed in the Dutch telephone directory, a few examples being MacLean, Abercrombie and Mackay.

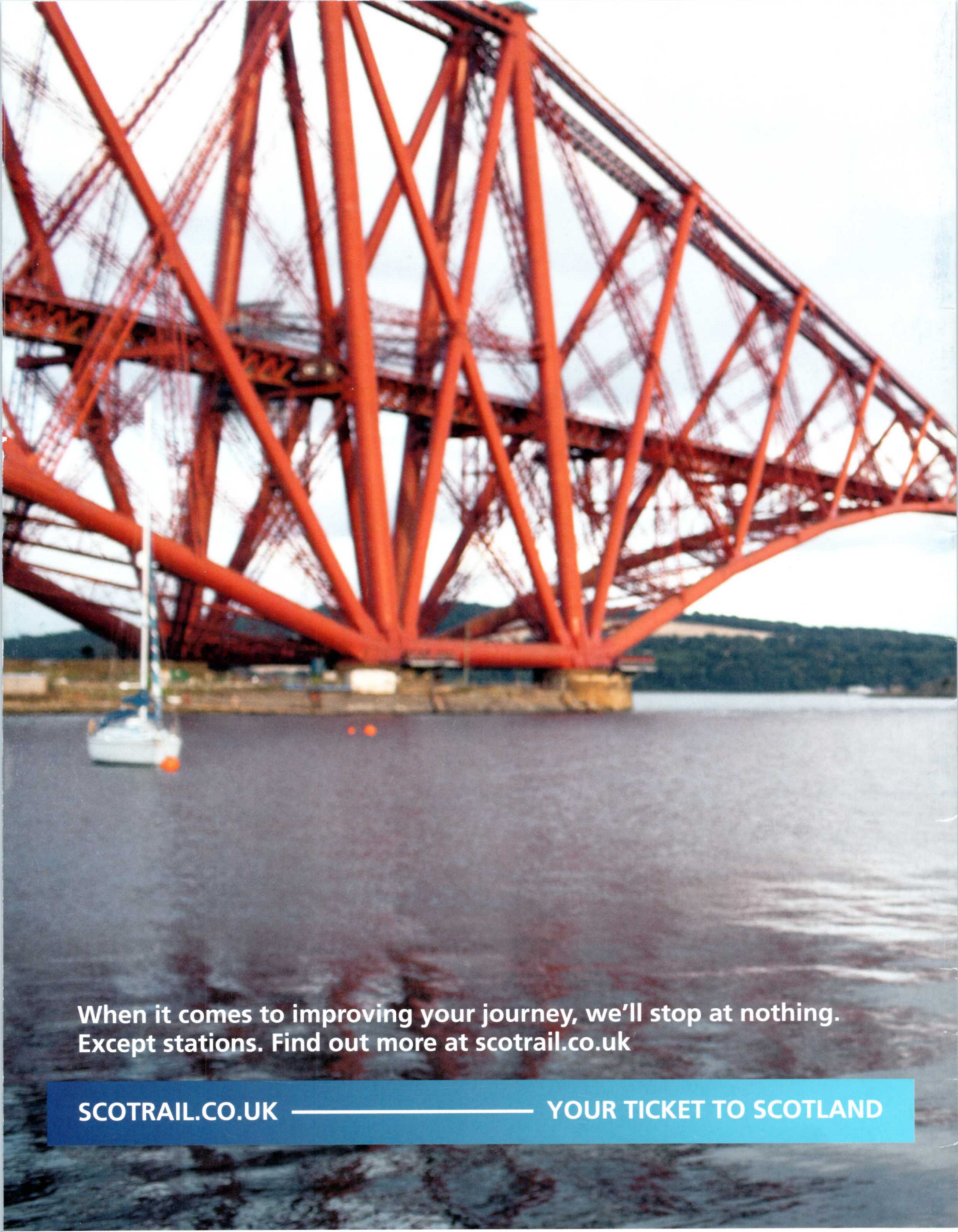
ROBERT BURNS

## BURNS NIGHT IN THE SOUTHERN NETHERLANDS

Burns Night is not just celebrated in Scotland; 25 January is also a special day in the Dutch city of Maastricht, where the local Robert Burns Society honours the poet's birthday every year. In 2009, the society celebrated the public vote which named Burns as 'Greatest Scot of All Time', ahead of William Wallace. The society's members see Burns as a great poet and inspiration, and admire his commitment to people, nature and culture. The society also promotes Scottish culture, from literature and art to traditional dress, dance and music.

Buskers are part of **Glasgow's music scene.** Walk through the city and enjoy the sounds

The clock in the middle of the main concourse **Glasgow Central Station**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YOUR TICKET TO SCOTLAND